

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01002 01 OF 02 211407Z
ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ACDA-12 ISO-00 NRC-05 AID-05
CEQ-01 CIAE-00 SOE-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08
EPA-01 INR-07 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05
USIA-06 OES-07 SP-02 DOE-11 INT-05 FRB-03 OMB-01
ITC-01 AGRE-00 LAB-04 OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-06
TRSE-00 CEA-01 /146 W
-----101795 211425Z /41

R 210730Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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DEPT FOR AMBASSADOR JEAN WILKOWSKI

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TATT, TGEN, UNGA, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

REFS: (A) STATE 005934, (B) AMBASSADOR WILKOWSKI
LETTER TO GREENBERG, DECEMBER 21, 1977

1. SUMMARY: DISCUSSION JANUARY 19 WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS
RESPONSIBLE FOR PLANNING PARTICIPATION IN UNITED
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR
DEVELOPMENT (UNCSTD) PROVIDED SOME INTERESTING INSIGHTS
INTO HOW SOVIETS VIEW UNCSTD AND UN ASSISTANCE PROJECTS
IN GENERAL. AS EXPECTED, MAJOR SOVIET CONCERN APPEARS
TO BE THAT UNCSTD DOES NOT SPAWN YET ANOTHER PERMANENT
UN AGENCY FOR PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO LDCS, AND
THAT SOVIET UNION AND UNITED STATES, AS THE TWO
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01002 01 OF 02 211407Z

LARGEST CONTRIBUTORS TO THE UN BUDGET, SHOULD HAVE A
COMMON FRONT ON THIS MATTER. SOVIETS WERE VAGUELY
UNHAPPY WITH FOCUS OF UNCSTD, BUT RESIGNED TO IT IN
VIEW OF LARGE LDC PRESSURE. NEVERTHELESS, SOVIETS
CLAIM THAT A CONSIDERABLE PREPARATION EFFORT FOR THE
CONFERENCE IS UNDERWAY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL INVOLVING
SUCH PROMINENT FIGURES AS SCST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

GVISHIANI, AND ACADEMY OF SCIENCES VICE PRESIDENT VELIKHOV. SOVIETS STATED THAT U.S. AND SOVIET VIEWS ON SUBSTANTIVE UNCSTD ISSUES, ARE NOT FAR APART, AND WELCOMED CLOSE BILATERAL TECHNICAL COORDINATION RELATED TO THE CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 18 SCICOUNS AND EMBASSY OFFICER MET WITH G. V. SHVEDOV, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS, STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SCST) AND ASSISTANTS A.S. MAKURIN AND KOTCHETKOV FOR DISCUSSION OF UNCSTD. SHVEDOV INDICATED HE HAD RECENTLY REPLACED DR. K.V. ANANICHEV AT SCST, WHO IS ASSIGNED TO OTHER DUTIES. (ANANICHEV WAS ORIGINALLY LISTED AS FOCAL POINT FOR UNCSTD.) SHVEDOV WHO DID MOST OF THE TALKING, INTRODUCED MAKURIN AS THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE UNCSTD, WHICH WILL OPERATE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF SCST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (AND KOSYGIN'S SON-IN-LAW) D.M. GVISHIANI. THE FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST WERE NOTED DURING THE DISCUSSION.

(A) FOCUS OF UNCSTD
IN RESPONSE TO SCICOUNS QUERY, SHVEDOV STATED THE SOVIETS WERE NOT QUITE HAPPY WITH THE TITLE AND FOCUS OF THE CONFERENCE. SOVIETS WOULD HAVE PREFERRED SIMPLY "UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 01002 01 OF 02 211407Z

TECHNOLOGY" NOTING THAT ALL COUNTRIES IN SOME WAY OR OTHER MIGHT BE CONSIDERED "DEVELOPING," IN THE SENSE THAT ALL COULD BENEFIT FROM BETTER ORGANIZATION AND FLOW OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGIES. FAILING THAT, THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO NARROW THE PURVIEW OF THE CONFERENCE TO "UN CONFERENCE ON THE ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES." SHVEDOV THEN WENT TO SOME LENGTH DESCRIBING HOW EXPENSIVE THE UN SYSTEM HAS BECOME, AND HOW LITTLE PRACTICAL BENEFITS ARE DERIVED. THE SOVIETS NOTE THAT THE LDCS, WHO CONTROL THE VOTES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HAVE THE MISTAKEN IMPRESSION THAT BY CREATING MORE ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANCE, THEY THEREBY INCREASE THEIR CHANCE OF DERIVING ACTUAL BENEFITS. WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS IS THAT THE LIMITED RESOURCES OF THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE UN SYSTEM, IN PARTICULAR THE U.S. AND THE U.S.S.R., ARE CHanneled INTO ADMINISTRATIVE UP-KEEP AND FUNDS FOR ACTUAL ASSISTANCE ARE THEREBY DIMINISHED. SHVEDOV RECALLED THE SOVIETS WERE UNABLE TO STEM THE CREATION OF A UN AGENCY DEALING WITH HOUSING,

RESULTING FROM THE UN HABITAT CONFERENCE IN CANADA, AND HOPED THAT THE UNCSTD WOULD NOT SPAWN ANOTHER DUPLICATIVE PERMANENT AGENCY. INSTEAD, THIS CONFERENCE SHOULD FOCUS ON DEFINING LDC NEEDS AND ESTABLISHING COORDINATIVE MECHANISMS FOR CHANNELING ASSISTANCE THROUGH ALREADY EXISTING UN SCIENCE-RELATED AGENCIES SUCH AS UNESCO, FAO, WHO AND WMO. HE NOTED THE EXTREME DIFFICULTY OF COORDINATING THE MYRIAD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE UN, AND UNDERLINED THAT THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (ACOSTD) SHOULD PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THIS TASK.

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 01002 01 OF 02 211407Z

(B) SITE FOR CONFERENCE

SHVEDOV SAID THE SOVIETS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE CHOICE OF VIENNA AS A SITE, ADDING THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE OBJECTED TO THE US AS HOST COUNTRY. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, VIENNA IS BETTER SINCE IT SOMEWHAT REDUCES TRAVEL COSTS FOR LDC PARTICIPANTS.

(C) STATUS OF SOVIET PLANNING FOR CONFERENCE

SOVIETS STATED THAT THE SCST, THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, AND SEVERAL OTHER MINISTRIES, INCLUDING THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENERGY QUESTIONS, ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN DRAFTING A NATIONAL PAPER. THE SOVIETS ARE HOLDING TO THEIR MAY 1ST DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF THE "FIRST VARIANT" OF THE NATIONAL PAPER. HOWEVER, DRAFTING OF THE FINAL

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 01002 02 OF 02 211419Z

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EPA-01 INR-07 L-03 NSF-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05

USIA-06 OES-07 SP-02 DOE-11 INT-05 FRB-03 OMB-01
ITC-01 AGRE-00 LAB-04 OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-06
TRSE-00 CEA-01 /146 W

-----101852 211424Z /41

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NATIONAL PAPER, CONTAINING SPECIFIC PROPOSALS, WILL
GO ON WELL INTO 1979. THE SOVIETS THOUGHT IT
UNREALISTIC AND IMPRACTICAL TO HAVE A FINAL VERSION
OF A NATIONAL PAPER DUE BY MAY 1ST OF THIS YEAR FOR
A CONFERENCE THAT WILL BE HELD OVER ONE YEAR
HENCE. THE SOVIETS HAD NOT YET CHOSEN THEIR
DELEGATION FOR THE UNCSTD CONFERENCE, HOWEVER ACADEMICIAN
Y. VELIKOV WILL HEAD THE SOVIET DELEGATION TO A
PREPARATORY COMMISSION MEETING IN GENEVA JANUARY 23 -
FEBRUARY 3RD. (FYI. VELIKOV, A BRILLIANT NUCLEAR
PHYSICIST AND SCIENCE ADMINISTRATOR HAS RECENTLY
BEEN APPOINTED VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOVIET
ACADMY OF SCIENCES. HE IS WELL KNOWN TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF ENERGY OFFICIALS THROUGH HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE
THERMO-NUCLEAR RESEARCH PROJECT UNDER THE BILATERAL
ATOMIC ENERGY AGREEMENT. END FYI). SHVEDOV
STATED THE SOVIETS PERCEIVE NO NEED TO PROVIDE
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 01002 02 OF 02 211419Z

ASSISTANCE TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN
PREPARATION OF NATIONAL PAPERS.

(D) PROSPECTS FOR U.S. -SOVIET CONSULTATION/COOPERATION
IN ADDITION TO COMBINING EFFORTS TO HOLD DOWN SKY-
ROCKETING UN ASSISTANCE-RELATED COSTS, SHVEDOV ALSO
PROFFERED SOME THOUGHTS ON WHAT POSITIVE STEPS
U.S. AND SOVIETS CAN TAKE TO BE OF REAL ASSISTANCE
TO LDCS. HE STATED THE SOVIET UNION DOES CONSIDER
THE GROWING ECONOMIC GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR NATIONS
TO BE OF GENUINE CONCERN TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE WORLD
COMMUNITY. SHVEDOV EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE
PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION S UNDERWAY IN THE UN REGIONAL
COMMISSION ON DEFINING THE FIVE MAJOR TECHNICAL
THEMES FOR THE UNCSTD. IT WAS NOTED HERE THAT THE
US AND USSR ARE COOPERATING BILATERALLY IN MANY

AREAS PROPOSED AS THEMES FOR THE CONFERENCE. SHVEDOV READILY CONCURRED WITH SCICOUNS SUGGESTION THAT EXPERTS VISITING EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY UNDER BILATERAL S&T PROGRAMS CONSULT WITH OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH PLANNING UNCSTD PARTICIPATION, AS FEASIBLE AND APPROPRIATE. SCICOUNS NOTED A NUMBER OF TOPICS SUCH AS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION AND POPULATION AS CONCERNS LDCS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBJECT OF CONTENTION IN THE UN. SHVEDOV RESPONDED THAT THE SOVIET UNION PERCEIVES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AS A WORLD-WIDE CONCERN OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND LDCS ALIKE, ALTHOUGH MANY PROBLEMS CONCERNING LDCS ACTUALLY INVOLVE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION. SHVEDOV WAS MORE NUANCED IN HIS COMMENTS ON POPULATIONS CONTROL, NOTING THAT CERTAIN PORTIONS OF THE WORLD ARE UNDOUBTEDLY OVER-POPULATED AND OTHERS UNDER-POPULATED. HOWEVER, HE AGREED IT WAS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 01002 02 OF 02 211419Z

LEGITIMATE TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION AT UNCSTD. SHVEDOV UNDERLINED THAT THE US AND USSR SHOULD COORDINATE AND CONSULT ON UNCSTD, SINCE OUR BASIC POSITIONS REGARDING THIS ACTIVITY WERE NOT FAR APART. HE PROVIDED SEVERAL EXAMPLES FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN WHICH THE US AND USSR WOUND UP ON OPPOSITE SIDES IN UN DEBATES THROUGH LACK OF CONSULTATION, ALTHOUGH IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF BOTH COUNTRIES WERE ALMOST IDENTICAL. HE SUGGESTED US/USSR CONSULTATIONS ON UNCSTD AGENDA POINT "SCIENCE AND THE FUTURE," WHICH HE NOTED WAS BEING DRAFTED BY THE UN SECRETARIAT WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF MEMBER COUNTRIES. HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME "CONTRADICTIONS" IN POLICY MAY CROP UP, QUOTING THE ADAGE "COMPLETE AGREEMENT ONLY EXISTS IN THE CEMETERY." WHILE BEING ESCORTED FROM MEETING, KOTCHETKOV (WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE JANUARY 23 GENEVA PREPCOM) NOTED TO SCICOUNS DESIRE FOR EMBASSY/SCST BILATERAL CONTACT ON UNCSTD AND SUGGESTED A PARTICULARLY APT TIME WOULD BE SHORTLY BEFORE THE JUNE MEETING OF THE ECE REGIONAL COUNCIL IN BUCHAREST. HE ALSO AGREED IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR US AND SOVIET DELEGATIONS TO CONSULT BEFORE AND DURING THIS MEETING.

3. COMMENT - WHILE IT IS CLEAR THAT THE INITIAL SOVIET MOTIVATION FOR OFFERING CLOSER CONSULTATION WITH THE US ON UNCSTD PREPARATIONS STEMS FROM A DESIRE TO LIMIT UN ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES, WE WERE STRUCK BY THE FRANK AND REFRESHINGLY OBJECTIVE SOVIETS COMMENTS AS REGARDS LDC NEEDS. IT IS UNUSUAL FOR US TO HEAR A RESPONSIBLE SOVIET OFFICIAL

STATE, EVEN PRIVATELY, THAT THE SOVIET UNION SHARES
A GENERAL OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO LDCS.
IN ADDITION, THE INVOLVEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS OF THE
STATURE AND COMPETENCE OF GVISHIANI AND VELIKOV
IN UNCSTD PREPARATIONS IS A PROMISING FIRST
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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 01002 02 OF 02 211419Z

INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS MAY BE SERIOUSLY INTERESTED
IN A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO UNCSTD. WHILE WE ARE
WELL AWARE OF THE DANGERS AND PITFALLS OF COORDINATION
WITH THE SOVIETS ON LDC MATTERS, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD
BE WELL WORTH-WHILE TO FOLLOW-UP SHVEDOV'S
INVITATION FOR FURTHER TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS.
SUBJECT TO DEPARTMENT CONCURRENCE, THE EMBASSY
WILL IN THE COMING MONTHS RECOMMEND APPROPRIATE
SOVIET EXPERTS TO CONSULT WITH AMBASSADOR WILKOWSKI'S
OFFICE WHEN IN WASHINGTON ON BILATERAL AGREEMENT
BUSINESS. SUGGESTIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT ON
FOLLOW-UP WITH THE SOVIETS HERE WILL BE WELCOMED.
END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING DELEGATIONS, TECHNOLOGICAL EXCHANGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW01002
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780032-1129
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780137/aaaabeyu.tel
Line Count: 303
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 310d25e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 5934
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3735019
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
TAGS: TATT, TGEN, UR, UNGA
To: STATE GENEVA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/310d25e1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014